

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
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AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USINT HAVANA
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 06298

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PBOR, PINT, ET, CU, SP
SUBJECT: REACTION OF SPANISH LEFT TO CUBAN INVOLVEMENT
IN ERITREA

REF; STATE 129942 NOTAL

1. SUMMARY: THE MAJOR SPANISH PARTIES OF THE LEFT (THE
PCE AND THE SOCIALIST PSOE) HAVE GIVEN LITTLE PUBLIC
ATTENTION TO CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN ERITREA OR RELATED
AFRICAN ISSUES, AND WHAT LITTLE THERE HAS BEEN HAS TENDED
TO SEE SOVIET/CUBAN ACTIVITIES AS HAVING A COMPARABLE
AND PERHAPS EVEN MORE PERNICIOUS COUNTERPART IN WESTERN
"IMPERIALISTIC" EFFORTS (I.E. SHABA). WHILE PSOE LEADERS
HAVE IN PRIVATE CRITICIZED TO US THE LACK OF PRINCIPLE
EVIDENT IN THE SOVIET/CUBAN SWITCH FROM THE SOMALIAN TO
THE ETHIOPIAN SIDE, THEY HAVE GIVEN US NO INDICATION OR
IMPRESSION THAT THEY INTEND TO TAKE THE MATTER UP WITH
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THE CUBANS. END SUMMARY

2. NEITHER THE SOCIALISTS' PARTY ORGAN (EL SOCIALISTA)
NOR THE COMMUNISTS' (MUNDO OBRERO) HAS COMMENTED ON THE
ETHIOPIA/ERITREA OR SHABA SITUATIONS UNTIL RECENTLY. ON
THE LATTER, MUNDO OBRERO DISMISSED "IMPERIALIST" LIES
REGARDING WESTERN MOTIVATIONS FOR THE SHABA ACTION, CLAIM-

ING SHABA'S COBALT WAS THE TRUE SOURCE OF THE WEST'S CONCERNS. EL SOCIALISTA SCORED THE "NEO-COLONIALISM AND GEOSTRATEGIC NEEDS OF THE GREAT POWERS" AS UNDERLYING THEIR AFRICAN ACTIVITIES. CRITICISM OF BOTH THE SOVIETS AND THE CUBANS WAS APPARENT IN THE PAPER'S OBSERVATION THAT THE SOVIETS LEAVE "SEMI-CLANDESTINE ARMED INTERVENTION" TO CUBA, A "COUNTRY OF THE 'NON-ALIGNED' GROUP WITH GREAT CREDIT AMONG THE VARIOUS LIBERATION MOVEMENTS".

3. BOTH PARTIES WERE ASKED BY THE LIBERAL-LEFT INDEPENDENT MADRID DAILY "EL PAIS" ABOUT THE GENERAL SITUATION IN AFRICA, AND THEIR REPLIES WERE REPORTED JUNE 2. THE SOCIALIST SPOKESMAN SAID HIS PARTY "DOES NOT EQUATE THE SOVIET ACTION WITH THE WESTERN" ONE, SINCE THE LATTER "IS MORE IMPORTANT AND OLDER". THE PARTY BELIEVED BOTH THE US AND THE USSR "ARE DETERMINED TO CONTINUE INTERVENING IN AFRICA". REGARDING SPAIN IN THIS CONTEXT, THE SPOKESMAN SAID "WE DO NOT HAVE THE SLIGHTEST POSSIBILITY OF IMPACTING ON THE MATTER".

4. THE PCE SPOKESMAN INTER ALIA CONDEMNED "WHATEVER INTERVENTION" IN AFRICA, ALSO CLAIMING WASHINGTON "IS EXAGGERATING" THE SOVIET AND CUBAN ACTION IN ZAIRE. "WE ALSO CONDEMN ALL MILITARY INTERVENTION (IN ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA)", THE SPOKESMAN SAID, "AND WE UNDERSTAND AND RESPECT THE ERITREAN MOVEMENT". BOTH PARTIES SAW

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THE APPARENTLY BURGEONING EAST-WEST CONFLICT IN AFRICA AS LENDING ADDITIONAL WEIGHT TO THEIR POSITIONS AGAINST SPANISH MEMBERSHIP IN NATO, ARGUING THAT SUCH MEMBERSHIP WOULD TIE SPAIN EVER MORE CLOSELY TO THE WEST, AND PREVENT BOTH ITS STRENGTHENING RELATIONS WITH NON-PRO-WESTERN AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND ITS PLAYING A PEACE-MAKING ROLE IN AFRICA.

5. AT LUNCH WITH THE CHARGE RECENTLY, PSOE LEADERS MUGICA AND YANEZ SPOKE BRIEFLY OF THE LACK OF PRINCIPLE EVIDENT IN THE SOVIET/CUBAN SWITCH FROM THE SOMALIAN TO THE ETHIOPIAN SIDE. THEY SEEMED NEITHER INDIGNANT NOR WORRIED OVER THE POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF THE SOVIET/CUBAN ACTION, HOWEVER, AND REVEALED A BELIEF THAT CUBA WAS SIMPLY DOING THE KREMLIN'S BIDDING THERE. IN SUM, NEITHER THE PUBLIC NOR PRIVATE REMARKS SUGGEST ANY INCLINATION BY THE SPANISH LEFT TO TAKE THE MATTER UP WITH THE CUBANS.

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